

Youthwatch

DARLINGTON

Darlington GP Surgery Visits 2019

Denmark Street Surgery, Moorlands Surgery and Clifton Court Surgery

Access to Information for Young People



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Who are Healthwatch Darlington?

Healthwatch Darlington Ltd (HWD) is a strong independent community champion giving local people a voice that improves and enhances health and social care provision on behalf of the people of Darlington. HWD believe that no matter who you are, where you live or what age you are, you do have a voice and you have the right for that voice to be heard.

Our Strategic Duties include:

Information Gathering

- Gathering views, experiences and needs of local people about their health and social care, focusing on those who are under-represented in decision making or face barriers to influencing the system.
- Gathering and monitoring other key information that tells us how the local health and social care system is working for people.

Influencing

- Influencing services and their commissioners to consider and act upon the views, experiences and needs we present.
- Championing the involvement of Darlington residents in the development and evaluation of services.

Informing

- Enabling people to get the most out of the current system by providing information about service provision, the rights people have in relation to their care, and opportunities they have to influence what care looks like.

We are independent and we make Health and Care services answerable to the people who use their services.



Who are Youthwatch Darlington?

Youthwatch Darlington is a young volunteering group for 14 -25 years old who aim to improve health and care services for young people living in Darlington. They are the voice for young patients, carers and service users.



You can find out more about Youthwatch Darlington by contacting Jemma Austin Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator via: j.austin@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk or by calling 01325 380145. Alternatively, you can visit:

www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk



YouthWatchDarlo



@youthwatchdarlo



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Why have we explored GP surgeries in Darlington and both the availability and accessibility of information presented for young people?

Initially, Youthwatch Darlington were contacted by the practice manager of Denmark Street surgery, whom expressed an interest in gaining an insight into young people's opinions with regards to the surgery's waiting rooms. Youthwatch Darlington was therefore asked to provide feedback in this area, considering their target audience - in this case, young people.

Youthwatch volunteers felt that this is an area which directly affects the experience of young people and thus were keen to get involved with this project.

We feel it is important to influence young people's experience at the surgery in a positive way. There is a clear lack of research when it comes to this area, therefore our investigation will provide clear advice, and thus focus, for surgeries to connect with and engage young people.

We believe that it is imperative that the correct information is available to young people and that such information is readily accessible to all.

Observation Visit

During the visit we observed the waiting areas within the main GP surgery and the annexe, which is across the road. Patients can access sexual and contraceptive health support from the annexe and also in the main building.

Methodology

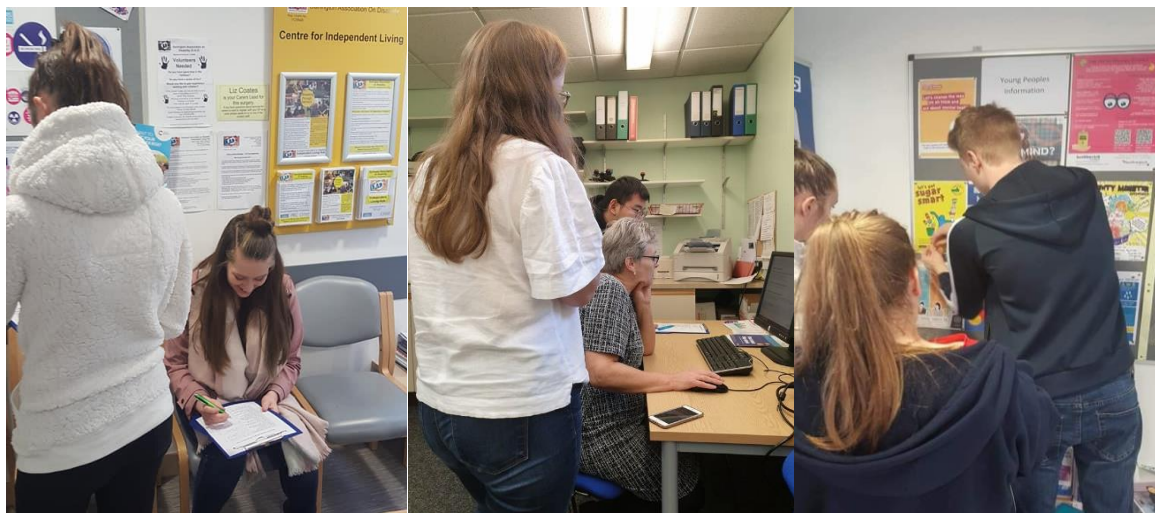
We carried out a series of observational visits to 3 of the GP surgeries situated in Darlington - Moorlands, Clifton Court and Denmark Street. Denmark Street Surgery approached us directly. Upon conducting this visit we offered to visit further practices across Darlington by contacting them directly. Clifton Court and Moorlands Surgery were really happy to accommodate further visits, which we conducted throughout 2019.

We paid particular attention to the waiting areas, corridors and sign-in areas.

During each visit we used a series of questions to focus our attention on specific aspects of the patient experience. This enabled us to identify the breadth of information which is already available for young patients, and to focus on areas where such information is lacking.

Questions Asked

1. Are there plenty of display posters with useful information for young people?
2. Is there a wide selection of information leaflets available for CYP?
3. Are there plenty of magazines or reading material for young people during the wait?
4. Is there a section for younger children such as a small selection of toys or books?
5. Does the waiting area seem welcoming for young patients?
6. Is it clear to young patients how to navigate the building, as they may be attending for the first time without a parent?
7. Does the website have a CYP section with plenty of information?
8. Is the website visually pleasing to younger patients?
9. Is there plenty of useful information and contact numbers available with a wide range of choice?
10. Is there information about rights for young patients on the website and in the waiting area?



Denmark Street Surgery

When observing and investigating the surgery we took note of a few different things, including the display of relevant posters and leaflets, how welcoming the surgery was, and what sort of information was available to young people.

Upon looking at the display of posters in the building, we found that there was quite a lot of general information, which could be useful to many, but **not much choice relating specifically to young people and young carers**. We also saw that some of the posters on display are **out of date and display incorrect information**. A lot of the information and posters shown on one particular display board was in black and white print, which is not as inviting to read and engage with as coloured posters would be. Along with this, there were positive comments from patients which were displayed on the wall, however, these again were in black and white, but are right in the corner of the room, so they were not very visible to anyone waiting in the room.

The GP surgery had a wide variety of leaflets about local services, but none of these related to younger people, and the issues that they may face. We feel there needs to be more information for young patients, for example; sexual health, mental health and young carers.

When looking around the surgery we found a CASH leaflet, which can be very helpful to young people, however, we were unsure as to whether this had correct and up to date information included. Following this, we researched the current delivery of sexual health and contraceptive services in Darlington, and we are concerned that the information within the leaflet may be out of date, therefore this would need to be reviewed.

There are a few small tables around the room, one of which, at the edge of the room, held reading material from a wide range of topics. This was good, as it encouraged a welcoming environment in the surgery where people can feel comfortable. However, we thought the placement could be more central, so that it is more accessible to people all over the waiting room, rather than just one side of the room. We think the addition of some children's books for very young patients, or parents that need to bring their children with them, should also be considered.

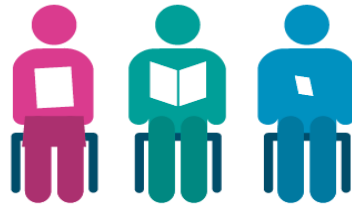
Overall, the surgery waiting room is welcoming for young people, however, the glass panels surrounding the receptionists is very unwelcoming and creates a closed atmosphere, which can make the patient feel closed off and intimidated. When we visited, there was a flu and shingles information board which was massively colourful and inviting to read and learn from. This was great, and we thought this could be implemented throughout the rest of the display boards, with more information regarding young people's health and wellbeing.

Summary of findings:

- There is a wide variety of general posters and leaflets but not much relating to young people; need more relating to mental health.

- Some posters and leaflets were out of date.
- Some posters are dull and non-colourful.
- Reading material was good but could do with some aimed at children.
- Glass panels are very unwelcoming and intimidating.
- Colourful display boards were great and could be used throughout the surgery.

RECEPTION



Annexe:

In the Annexe building we saw an increase of relevant posters to young people, of which most were in colour and were easy to read from afar. However, we noted that there could be more posters and information focusing on mental health.

There are loads of informative leaflets on the leaflet board; however it was around the corner so it was hard to see. Overall, the annex had a much more welcoming atmosphere, due to the radio and the lack of glass surrounding the receptionist.

One issue we highlighted was the navigation and signs for the other building the patient may need. We felt that a young patient attending the GP surgery, may not be aware of the second building, as there is not much clear information on where it is. This would lead to the obvious need to look around, or possibly to ask for directions, which could be embarrassing in front of other patients. As this second building is for contraceptive services and sexual health, this can sometimes be a difficult subject to approach. One of our Youthwatch members has had first-hand experience with confusing navigation regarding which building to go to. Therefore, we investigated this whilst we visited, and we noticed directional posters above the check in machine. Although this is can be informative, it is not in direct eye-line so can be easily missed, as our Youthwatch member did.

Summary of findings:

- Relevant posters which were in colour and easy to read.
- Could have more posters focusing on mental health.
- Loads of general leaflets but hard to see as they are around the corner, not many directed at younger people.
- Good atmosphere with the radio and lack of glass.
- Difficult to navigate and to know which building to attend.

Website:

Youthwatch Darlington visited Denmark Street Surgery's website and we initially struggled to locate information directed at young people as it was at the bottom of a long list of links. We think that the list could be reordered as we believe it looked random and some of the links take priority over others with young people towards the bottom.

Once we accessed the page for young people we noticed that it wasn't very inviting as there are no images but a large amount of text which had differing formatting throughout the page. Some of the text is not well written, for example, the listing of pharmacies provide the oral hormonal pill is very difficult to read as there is no punctuation to separate the different locations. Some information needs to be updated as it is out of date. For instance, DISC has had a name change and is now known as Humankind.

Youthwatch found that the website had a lot of information about the services that were mentioned, however we felt that there could be more information regarding different topics.

Conclusion and surgery specific recommendations

Throughout this observation visit we were really happy to see such a wide selection of posters and information with colourful display boards. However, there does need to be some improvement made to the variety and selection available to younger patients. We think it's important to focus on pressing areas of concern for young people such as mental health, sexual health and young carers. Although the surgery itself was well presented and welcoming, the website was less informative and could do with more improvements.

Regarding the navigation between the main surgery and the Annexe, we recommend that a clearer directional poster, with an image of the Annexe building is placed next to the check in machine rather than above, so it is more at eye level. Alternatively, there could be a pop up on the machine when checking in, so the patients are required to close it, so that patients take notice of it.

Youthwatch recommends that the surgery adjusts the listings on the website so contain comma's or bullet points, so the lists are easier to read.



Clifton Court Medical Practice

At Clifton Court surgery, volunteers felt that there was plenty of reading material available to patients - though only a small proportion of this reading material related to children and young people. We noticed a few leaflets, mostly corresponding to similar issues. We felt that more focus could be placed upon sexual and mental health.

Further, we felt that the presentation of posters across the surgery could also be improved. As posters begin to overlap, covering each other, potentially vital information is lost and rendered unreadable by patients. Such a larger volume of information can also account for overload, as subjects begin to merge into one and the distinction between each service or health concern is lost. We feel that reducing the number of posters and making each one stand out in its own right, patients may feel more inclined to read the information on offer and take it away with them.

We feel that more emphasis should be placed on educating young people. It is vital that young service users know and understand their rights when it comes to accessing services and the issue of confidentiality.

On the whole, the waiting area was described as open and bright. The music choice seemed uplifting and suited the taste of the younger generation well. It helped to create a relaxing and friendly atmosphere.

Signage was described as good and the volunteers felt that on the whole the surgery was easy to navigate. Though, we felt that the sign-in screen could be more easily accessible as we felt it was in a position that many patients would find easy to miss.

Summary of findings:

- Not enough emphasis was placed on information relevant to young people. The information on the walls and in leaflets was primarily aimed at the older generation.
- The waiting area was welcoming and open.

Website

Youthwatch volunteers particularly liked the layout and presentation of the Clifton Court Surgery website. It is colourful, easy to navigate and contains lots of important information.

We thought the latest news section on the home page was particularly informative as it keeps patients up to date with service changes within the practice.

Further, the website contains a rather useful section aimed at educating the public at the capabilities of different members of the surgery staff, enabling them to make the correct decision when deciding which medical practitioner to see. This

could work to reduce the work load and subsequent strain placed on GPs as a result of this mis-education.

It is also important that the website has a clear patient feedback section, allowing patients to easily and privately air their views of the surgery.

It further contains a large range of services, meaning that patients can save time in finding necessary information.

We did feel that the useful links bar at the bottom of the web page could be improved. There are many services on offer in Darlington - both in the NHS and voluntary sector which could be included. In this way, it may be appropriate to introduce a page dedicated to such links, enabling patients to self-sign-post onto other more suitable services.

Conclusion

Clifton Court surgery manages to use its web presence highly effectively. Its website was among the easiest to navigate, making finding surgery information less time consuming for young people. We were delighted by the light and friendly atmosphere of the surgery which enables young people to feel both welcome and at ease.



Moorlands GP Surgery

When entering Moorlands Surgery, we were delighted at the light and open space in which patients are requested to wait. Across the walls, there are a multitude of information leaflets, mostly relating to current health campaigns running across the UK. The walls were bright, colourful and engaging, with a wealth of information. Yet, we felt that the room was lacking in information which could be taken away by patients and considered at a later date or potentially in more detail.

Hidden away in the corner of the surgery, however, we later found a small set of leaflets, covering a wide variety of health topics. It may be useful in future to make such leaflets more accessible to patients by altering their location.

One area in which the waiting room seemed to be deficient at first glance is information for young people, as many of the posters and campaigns were aimed at the older generation. Yet, as we began to move around the surgery, we found a fantastic notice board seemingly dedicated to the mental and physical health of young people. This contained a wide-variety of information, from contraception's and sexual health, to depression, heart health and cancer. One way in which this could be improved is through considering altering the placement of such a notice board, making it more visible to patients who may be sat down waiting around the corner.

Overall, we felt that the waiting area was welcoming for young patients. It had a wide range of magazines which young people enjoy reading - from cars, to fashion to local news. Further, the area was light and airy. Volunteers commented on the noise level of the room - with a large number of patients contained, it seemed loud, but most felt the noise was not off-putting or intimidating in any way.

On the whole, volunteers found the surgery to be easy to navigate, with sign posting clearly visible, indicating where each patient needs to go to receive care.

We felt that the suggestion and feedback box did not have a prominent enough position within the waiting room as such feedback is invaluable for surgeries wishing to improve.

Summary of findings:

- We felt that the notice board for young people could be made a greater focus of the waiting room, making it more visible to its target audience.
- We felt that on the whole, the volume of information on offer was great, though there are some areas which show room for improvement, namely physical health concerns.
- Signposting around the surgery was fantastic, making it clear and simple to navigate the surgery.

Website

All of the Youthwatch volunteers felt that the website was very useable and easy to navigate. We found the headings to be sufficient in order for users to find the information they required quickly and easily.

One point of contention was the lack of colour and imagery. We felt that this could pose a problem for some users - for instance those for whom English was not their first language or for people with specific learning difficulties.

We felt that one way to use colour would be to highlight particularly important information. This could include opening times and clinic availability.

It is also imperative that surgery and practitioner contact details and information respectively are kept up to date.

Further, on the contacts page, some abbreviations are used which are not always clear to the public. This can leave service users confused if they are searching for a service and are not accustomed to its abbreviation.

Conclusion

On the whole, we felt that Moorlands surgery catered to its younger patients well. It was fantastic to see a notice board which specifically targeted the younger audience, containing lots of useful information and signposted young people on to appropriate services. The waiting area was both welcoming and informative and its website provided all of the necessary information in a clear and concise manner.



Recommendations, moving forward and acknowledgements

Youthwatch have some recommendations and suggestions that we look forward to help and assist with in the future:

All of the surgeries we investigated should expand their range of informative leaflets for younger patients, ensuring that they are relevant and up to date at all times.

- **Youthwatch Darlington can provide a list of recommended leaflets that the surgery should order.**

There is a broken leaflet display board within Denmark Street Surgery that is taking up a large amount of free space which could be utilised by either fixing the board to display more leaflets or removing the entire thing to make space for a young person's display board as there isn't currently a permanent one.

Youthwatch recommend that all posters and displayed feedback and comments should be printed in colour in order to encourage engagement with the patients.

- **Youthwatch Darlington will be providing the surgery with posters for young people.**

For many surgeries, using magazine tables installed in the patient waiting areas as a place to promote a small subsection of important or topical leaflets could be highly effective. This would enhance the currently available reading material and ensure that each patient has access to such information.

Youthwatch recommend that a small selection of children's books should be provided for the younger patients whilst waiting.

Youthwatch Darlington recommends that the website is kept up to date and that the formatting is kept constant.

Youthwatch believe that each surgery website should have more images and more sources for further reading and information.

- **Youthwatch can provide a list of relevant web links.**

Moving forward

Youthwatch Darlington will be sharing this report with all local GP surgeries, offering to continue visits in further surgeries throughout 2020. They will also share this report with Primary Healthcare Darlington, to highlight good practice within surgeries that we have visited so far. Finally, they will share this report with Darlington Borough Council and Healthwatch England, to demonstrate how young people are making a difference in the Borough of Darlington.

Acknowledgments

Youthwatch Darlington would like to thank Demark Street Surgery, Clifton Court Medical Practice and Moorlands Surgery for arranging these visits.

We have really enjoyed working on this project and improving services for young people who attend the surgery.

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